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02/09/24 BIG PHARMA

Pharma CEOs Grilled by Senators Over Sky-High Drug Prices + More

The Defender's Big Pharma Watch delivers the latest headlines related to pharmaceutical companies and their products, including vaccines, drugs, and medical devices and treatments. The views expressed in the below excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender. Our goal is to provide readers with breaking news that affects human health and the environment.

By The Defender Staff

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Pharma CEOs Grilled by Senators Over Sky-High Drug Prices

NBC News reported:

> Lawmakers sharply criticized the CEOs of three major drugmakers during a Senate committee hearing on Thursday, saying the exorbitant cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. means many Americans are unable to afford the medications they need to live.
>
> Prescription drug prices in the U.S. are notoriously higher than in other countries, a stark discrepancy that Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chair Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., called out. The high prices mean people go without the medications, Sanders said.
>
> Senators heard testimony from Johnson & Johnson's Joaquin Duato, Merck's Robert Davis and Bristol Myers Squibb's Chris Boerner. J&J and Merck's executives only agreed to testify after Sanders threatened to subpoena them.
>
> The yawning gap between the prices the three drugmakers charge in the U.S. versus other countries for the same drug was the reason three executives were called to testify, Sanders said.

Treatment for Teens Is Inaccessible, Costly as U.S. Opioid Deaths Rise

USA TODAY reported:

> As overdose deaths continue to increase among American teens, treatment for opioid use disorder remains limited. A new study shows that one intervention — inpatient treatment — is inaccessible to many.
>
> Few facilities exist nationwide and they are often unaffordable for families whose children are struggling with opioid addiction. Families must navigate a complex web of addiction treatment services as they try to avoid another overdose for their children, the study found.
>
> Researchers called 160 treatment addiction facilities listed in the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) treatment locator in December 2022.
>
> Using a "secret-shopper" approach, the researchers presented themselves as the aunt or uncle of a 16-year-old who had a recent non-fatal overdose of fentanyl and asked about treatment options and costs. They learned how difficult it was for parents in these scenarios to find these kinds of interventions.

Moderna Shares Slide on Concerns Over Drop in RSV Vaccine Efficacy

Reuters reported:

> Moderna (MRNA.O), fell as much as 7% on Friday after Wall Street analysts raised concerns over faster declines in the efficacy of its experimental respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine when compared with rival shots from GSK (GSK.L), and Pfizer (PFE.N),.
> Data posted on Thursday ahead of an RSV conference next week showed an efficacy of about 63% after 8.6 months in preventing RSV-related respiratory disease, down from 84% at 3.3 months.
> The efficacy for GSK's vaccine, called Arexvy, fell to 77% at 14 months from 83%, while Pfizer's slipped to 49% in 17 months from 67%, according to TD Cowen.

Johnson & Johnson Case Signals Employee Drug Price Suits to Come

Bloomberg Law reported:

> A novel lawsuit from an employee suing Johnson & Johnson Inc. for allegedly mismanaging drug benefits appears a harbinger of litigation to come against companies, especially those that rely on pharmaceutical industry middlemen to negotiate pricing and rebates.
>
> Ann Lewandowski, a healthcare policy and advocacy director for Johnson & Johnson, filed the proposed class action on Feb. 5 in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. The suit said the New Jersey-based company mismanages its employee health plan by paying its pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts Inc., inflated prices for generic specialty drugs that are widely available at much lower cost.

AbbVie's Winning Streak Continues as Pfizer Looks to Boost Flagging Paxlovid Sales With Extra DTC Spend

Fierce Pharma reported:

> It's a new year, but AbbVie's winning streak continues as its two leading immunology meds, Skyrizi and Rinvoq, secure the first and second spots, respectively, for the highest spending on pharma TV drug ads in January, according to real-time ad trackers iSpot.TV.
>
> The third spot also goes to a familiar contender and arch-rival of AbbVie's drugs, in the form of Sanofi and Regeneron's megablockbuster immunology drug, Dupixent.
>
> The top three perfectly mirror the podium places seen last year, but there is a big change for the fourth-highest DTC spender. For January, this was Pfizer's COVID drug Paxlovid, which had ad hoc appearances last year but was not listed in the top 10 in December.
>
> That changed last month when Pfizer spent a meaty $22.7 million on its old DTC "If it's COVID, Paxlovid," up from the $6.7 million in December. This comes as the New York pharma giant is reducing its workforce and aiming to save billions in 2024 amid falling sales for its entire COVID franchise.

FDA Removal of Decongestants Made With Ineffective Drug Would Disrupt Drug Supply Chain, Experts Say

CIDRAP reported:

> If the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pulls cough and cold medications containing the active ingredient phenylephrine from shelves, it will set off a wave of drug supply chain problems, researchers from the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Toronto assert today in JAMA.
>
> In September 2023, the FDA's Non-prescription Drug Advisory Committee reviewed new data on phenylephrine, concluding that it is ineffective. The committee recommended that the drug, used in many over-the-counter nasal decongestants as a single ingredient or in combination with other ingredients, be removed from the market.
>
> The researchers said that if the FDA decides to pull phenylephrine, most multi-symptom products will be unavailable as they undergo reformulation, as few pseudoephedrine alternatives are available. The FDA is requesting public comment before taking any action. In the event of an administrative removal of these products, the authors said clinicians and consumers could substitute oral pseudoephedrine or intranasal decongestants such as phenylephrine or oxymetazoline.
>
> "The FDA needs to hold over-the-counter drugs to a standard of effectiveness similar to that of prescription drugs," Timothy Anderson, MD, assistant professor of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, said in a university news release. "A comparable pathway is needed for drugs that are sold over the counter as exists for post-approval monitoring of the risks and efficacy of prescription drugs. This will require a substantial investment in infrastructure to expand capacity."

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Paul Hastilow
2 days ago

Here we go again, ! Big pHarma holding the Sword of Damocles, over our Heads again. It's All about Money.....! America pay over the odds for Medication, that is The same, but cheaper in other Countries....! America with their Obesity and Diabetes issues are the Goose that lays the Golden Egg...!
It's a vicious Circle and "Perpetual Motion" money making machine for the Pharmaceutical and Agriculture pesticide industry.
A System that has been in use for 100 yrs or so.!
The Fertilizers they use for Growing our Food supplies , and Genetically Modified foods for Animal fodder, are Not conducive to Our Health , as they are Not compatible for Human Beings, and will slowly make us Sick.
So Big pHarma, take over with their "Remedies with Fancy Unpronounceable Names" also "Tainted" with ingredients not suitable for our intricate Human systems. Which has a built in "Immune system" to keep us Healthy.
These "Toxic" substances (same or similar to those used in COVID Vaxxines) give us "Adverse Reactions" that make us even sicker,(or Maimes and Kills us) and even more Dependant on Drugs that don't "Fix anything"
The Medical Fraternity are paid, to keep quiet, with corruption Money from pHarma representatives . So the Wheel keeps Rolling and Shareholders keep getting an Annual Bonus, but Certainly not for "A Job Well Done".
By Our Denial ,to Accept the Obvious, we are complicit with their plan and Agenda......! And the plot Thickens.... 'Cus Now they want to Eliminate Farmers and Fresh "Organic" foods that Humans have Acclimated too since "Biblical Times"
And even before the "Flood". God Help us All to Escape this "Treadmill of Corruption".

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globalres ➦ Paul Hastilow
2 days ago

Very well said.

1 | 0 | Reply • Share ›

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